

RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN

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GODETIA VIMINEA CONGDONII
ORCHID FLOWERED GODETIA

Prepared
by
RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN
of the
NATIVE PLANTS OF CALIFORNIA

Santa Ana Canyon
Orange County
California

GODETIA VIMINEA CONGDONII
ORCHID FLOWERED GODETIA

Onagraceae

Evening-Primrose Family

An erect annual 1-3 ft. high, sometimes simple when crowded, but generally well branched from near the base and growing 1-2 ft. across. Herbage light green, the stems reddish or light green, minutely puberulent. Leaves alternate, the largest $2-2\frac{1}{2}$ in. long, $\frac{3}{8}$ in. wide, narrowly lanceolate, very short petioled. Flowers borne solitary in the axils, with 2-4 rather closely aggregated at the tips of the branchlets, $2-2\frac{3}{4}$ in. across; buds erect, more or less pilose, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. long; hypanthium funnelform, $\frac{1}{2}$ in. long with an inner ring of hairs about $\frac{1}{3}$ above its base; calyx lobes $\frac{3}{4}$ in. long, forming a 4-sided bud, acutely pointed and generally pilose; ovary nearly sessile, 8-ribbed, about $\frac{3}{8}$ in. long; the 4 calyx lobes become deflexed as the flower opens, generally remaining as 2 pairs slightly united at their tips; petals 4, $1-1\frac{1}{2}$ in. long, broadly obovate or cuneate, without a claw, almost alike on both faces, colored a very pale orchid or lavender with a satiny lustre and a central rich reddish-purple blotch about $\frac{1}{4}$ in. long; stamens 8, inserted on the summit of the hypanthium in 2 series, 4 longest are alternate with the petals, 4 shorter opposite the petals, anthers 2-celled, slightly darker than the petals, recurved in anthesis, filaments whitish, flattened; style about $\frac{3}{4}$ in. long, with a purple, velvety, 4-parted stigma nearly $\frac{3}{16}$ in. across; ovary 4-celled, 8-ribbed, at maturity about 1 in. long, $\frac{3}{16}$ in. thick, uniformly thickened except for the abruptly contracted beak, containing numerous small brown seeds. At maturity the capsules split from the summit and the seeds are scattered only tardily. In seedlings the cotyledons are foliar, about $\frac{1}{2}$ in. long, have a few faint teeth and are frequently constricted near the middle of each side.

The genus Godetia was proposed in 1835 by Spach, who honored C.H. Godet, a Swiss botanist. About 25 species of Godetia are known from North and South America, of which more than 15 kinds are native to California. Some kinds have been in cultivation for nearly 100 years and have become highly prized horticultural. The California species practically all flower in late spring, hence the common name Farewell-To-Spring which is applied to many kinds. The genus Godetia is most closely related to Clarkia. In some of the other genera of the Evening-Primrose Family, of which there are about 25 genera and over 500

species, the flowers open during the night and close when the hot sun strikes them the following morning, a feature of the true Evening-Primroses (Oenotheras), whereas in most Godetias the flowers close at night.

Godetia viminea Congdonii was described in 1907 by Prof. W. L. Jepson of the University of California and was named in honor of J.W. Congdon, a California lawyer whose avocation was botany. Congdon had obtained his original specimens in 1896 at Hetch-Hetchy, Tuolumne Co. It ranges from the southern Sierra foothills to Shasta Co., generally reaching its best development at the lower edges of the Yellow Pine belt or at the upper edges of the Digger Pine belt and is often abundant in open meadows. Typical G. viminea is largely confined to the Coast Ranges of northern California and southern Oregon and is distinguished by blotchless petals and capsules which are thickened in the middle. Variety incerta from the Yosemite region has nearly crimson petals with a blotch. Godetia viminea and its varieties appear to be most closely related to G. quadrivulnera and purpurea, both of which generally have much smaller flowers.

This Orchid Flowered Godetia generally comes into bloom in its native stands late in May but is at its best during June. The flowers do not vary greatly in color, but we have found a very lovely cream colored sport in Amador Co.

Our strain of Godetia viminea Congdonii was obtained near Pine Grove, Amador Co. in 1933 where the species is especially fine. Under cultivation the plants are larger than in the wild and produce more and larger flowers, as well as having a longer blooming season.

Propagation of this Godetia is by seeds which may be broadcast or sown in rows in the late fall or early spring. The seedlings may also be grown in flats and transplanted when an inch or two high. Fall plantings generally produce the best plants, but the blooming period is about the same regardless of the time of planting. The plants will thrive in any garden soil except the heavy clay or adobe types. Irrigation throughout the spring will promote growth, but after the flowers begin to open no further water should be given. Seeds mature in July and can be harvested by drying the entire plants, after which the hard capsules must be crushed to obtain a good percentage of the seeds.

Godetia viminea Congdonii is one of the most beautiful of the genus and is also one of the last to bloom in spring. It is an excellent plant for growing by itself or in mixtures with other wildflowers and makes a fine cut flower which will last for many days.

RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN
Of The Native Plants of California.

Established 1927

In Memory of John W. Bixby

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Purpose: A scientific institution devoted
to the growth and study of the native plants
of California for their botanical, horticult-
ural and popular features.

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MAIL ADDRESS

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